

VZCZCXRO3898  
OO RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHGO RUEHMC RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS  
RUEHTM  
DE RUEHTG #0015/01 0082220  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 082220Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1430  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/USOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/COMSOUTH SOUTH IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 000015

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2020

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: ZELAYA SEEKING DEAL BEFORE TERM OF OFFICE EXPIRES

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya told Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) for Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) Craig Kelly and the Ambassador that he cannot request political asylum in a foreign country before his term of office expires on January 27 because the "Caracas Pact" would prohibit him from making public statements. President Zelaya gave PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador a copy of a draft note that he said was the last communication he had with the regime regarding his departure from Honduras. The draft note is from the Government of the Dominican Republic and requests safe conduct for him to attend a meeting of Central American Presidents. President Zelaya said he wants to reach a political deal with president-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo but de facto regime leader Roberto Micheletti is hindering their dialogue. Zelaya said that a deal with Lobo is possible if Lobo agrees to: foster active participation by citizens in government, promote projects for the poor administered by the poor, and enter into dialogue with the anti-coup resistance movement. President Zelaya expressed reservations about the establishment of a truth commission. He also said Micheletti has said he will not relinquish power January 27. End summary.

Elections

-----

12. (C) WHA PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador met with President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya at the Brazilian Embassy on January 15. Zelaya told them that the November 29 general election had strengthened de facto regime leader Roberto Micheletti and his supporters as well as the military. Zelaya claimed that Micheletti had, through common acquaintances, sent the message that he will not relinquish power before January 27 when the administration of president-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo takes office. According to Zelaya, Lobo will be a weak president with the threat hanging over him that the regime supporters will do to him what they did to Zelaya if his actions and policies displease them.

Political Deal and Asylum

-----

13. (C) President Zelaya told PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador that he cannot request political asylum from a foreign government before his term of office expires on January 27. PDAS Kelly told Zelaya that State Department lawyers have advised that requesting political asylum would not imply resignation from the office of president. The Ambassador added that de facto foreign minister Carlos Lopez Contreras

had said he was willing to issue President Zelaya safe conduct out of Honduras without any conditions if he were granted political asylum in a foreign country. President Zelaya countered that the "Caracas Pact" (NFI) would prohibit him from making public statements about Honduras or the country in which he sought asylum and that he could not accept that condition while still in office. President Zelaya told PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador that the last communication he had with the regime regarding departure from Honduras was a draft note Zelaya gave the regime. President Zelaya gave PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador a copy of the note. Informal Embassy translation of the note is provided in paragraph 10.

¶4. (C) President Zelaya said a political deal with Lobo to restore the constitutional and democratic order is only possible until January 27 because after that date Zelaya ceases to be president. Zelaya said Lobo is open to coming to an agreement with him, but that Micheletti is jealous of Lobo and is blocking Zelaya's attempts at dialogue with Lobo. President Zelaya added that Micheletti opposes any deal between Zelaya and Lobo because it would strengthen Zelaya politically but weaken Micheletti. President Zelaya said Lobo has criticized him and this has offended Latin America's heads of state who identify with Zelaya. He also said a political deal that restores the constitutional order would benefit Honduras. President Zelaya told PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador that politically it would be best for him to stay in the Brazilian Embassy until January 27 and then request political asylum in a foreign country in his capacity as a private citizen. He noted, however, that he wants to reach a political deal with Lobo because he wants to live in Honduras

TEGUCIGALP 00000015 002 OF 003

with his family. Zelaya said that the country's crisis will continue and be exacerbated if no political deal is reached before January 27. The Ambassador told President Zelaya that he would inform president-elect Lobo that Zelaya wants to reach a deal with Lobo.

¶5. (C) President Zelaya said that in order to reach a political deal with Lobo, Lobo has to pledge to continue Zelaya's commitment to active participation by citizens in government. Lobo would also have to promise to set up programs for the benefit of the poor managed by the poor and not by the government. Finally, Lobo would have to recognize the anti-coup resistance movement as a social group with which he will maintain a dialogue. The Ambassador asked Zelaya if he had asked Lobo to promise that he would hold a Constituent Assembly. Zelaya denied this, but then added that Lobo could promise to conduct a poll on the Constituent Assembly and that this would garner good will with about half the Honduran population.

#### National Reconciliation -----

¶6. (C) PDAS Kelly told President Zelaya that the U.S. wants to help Lobo achieve national reconciliation. He noted that the U.S. position has been and will continue to be that there was a coup d'etat on June 28 and that the democratic and constitutional order must be restored. Zelaya said he had no problem supporting Lobo if Lobo supported him.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador told President Zelaya that the U.S. believes establishment of a truth commission is important because the story of the political crisis needs to be told without making judgments. The Ambassador said that Costa Rican President Oscar Arias had convinced Lobo that political amnesty is crucial for creation of an atmosphere that allows for dialogue and for Honduras to move forward. President Zelaya responded that creation of a truth commission would not be simple and that its success would depend on who serves in the commission.

#### Re-engagement with International Community

-----  
¶18. (C) PDAS Kelly said that the international community will once again focus on Honduras during the January 27 presidential inauguration. He told President Zelaya that he could play the role of statesman by facilitating Honduras' re-engagement with the international community, particularly donors. PDAS Kelly noted that resumption of assistance to Honduras does not imply disregard for the fact that a coup did take place on June 28.

Populist Governance  
-----

¶19. (C) President Zelaya told PDAS Kelly and the Ambassador that, before the June 28 coup, he planned to propose allowing a second presidential term, but not consecutively with the first; he claimed that he had garnered the support of former Honduran presidents. President Zelaya said the U.S. should support democracy and that democracy means greater contact between governments and the people, such as by carrying out polls. President Zelaya defined national unity as participatory discussion of a country's problems. President Zelaya complained that wealthy Hondurans don't pay taxes which means the state lacks the funds to cover citizens's needs and is forced to enter into pacts with social partners in order to govern. PDAS Kelly told Zelaya that, while greater democratic participation through referendums, for example, is always positive, it can cause tension with the legislature and a balance is necessary to prevent unduly weakening the legislature.

¶10. (C) Informal Embassy translation of note discussed in paragraph 3 follows:

Begin Text.

DRAFT LETTER FOR DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT REQUEST

(Draft)

TEGUCIGALP 00000015 003 OF 003

The Government of the Dominican Republic by this means advises that it will organize a meeting of the Presidents of Central America with the aim of supporting the dialogue proposed by the Honduran community and an exit to the institutional crisis, whereby it officially requests that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras extend safe conduct that guarantees the safety and rights of Citizen JOSE MANUEL ZELAYA ROSALES so that he can move from the Embassy of Brazil to the airport of Tegucigalpa, leave the country and travel to the Dominican Republic in response to the invitation extended to him as a distinguished guest.

The Dominican Government requests that the State of Honduras issue the safe conduct document requested by this government considering diplomatic norms, practice, and the experience in this area gathered by our government.

The Government of the Dominican Republic avails itself of this opportunity to extend its greetings to the State of Honduras and to express its appreciation for its good offices regarding this invitation.

End Text.

LLORENS